



10 Ingredients to Keep Your Waistline Down This Winter

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As seasons change, so do our eating habits. Winter is often nutritionally challenging, we move away from salads and smoothies to heartier, richer foods and with that we generally consume more calories. We crave hot drinks like coffee and teas and drink less water. Unfortunately, winter clothes covering up our bodies aren't the best motivator for weight-management. Lastly, exercise gets so much harder as sleeping in on a cold morning seems so much more rewarding. With all these challenging factors we need to work that much harder to keep our healthy eating habits on track and our immune systems strong.

HELPFUL INGREDIENTS

When you are trying to keep your waistline down this winter, the inventory found in your pantry will be a deciding factor as to whether or not you succeed. While fresh fruits and vegetables may often wilt before the week is up, there are other healthy items which can be stored without having to think twice. Forget about pasta and processed sauces – keep these waistline-friendly items stocked at all times and you will have no other option than to craft up creative, tasty and healthy meals.



1. Cinnamon

Flavouring meals without adding sugar, salt or calorie dense mix-ins has never been this easy. Seasoning foods and drinks with cinnamon offers beneficial properties and flavour without the added calories. Adding cinnamon to your coffee instead of sugars or sweeteners is a great way to keep your weight on track. Cinnamon has also been shown to help decrease sugar cravings by helping to control blood glucose levels¹.

2. Mustard Seeds

Mustard seeds are rich in selenium, which helps the thyroid to function properly and in this way can assist with weight loss². Further beneficial properties include the anti-inflammatory effect it has on the body which may help ease joint pain from all the hours spent exercising. Add these small seeds to cooked rice dishes and curries.

3. Cayenne Pepper

The best way to pump up the taste of a meal is to add fresh herbs or spices like cayenne pepper to your dishes. Not only is it calorie free, but according to studies, it helps to decrease appetite and boosts the metabolism^{3,4}. Sprinkle cayenne pepper on a boiled egg, add it to your sauces or use it to spice up dishes like stir-fry.

4. Ginger

When I say ginger I don't mean store-bought ginger beer or ginger ale, I'm talking about that proper brown root that you used to see your mom cooking with. Fresh ginger root has many beneficial properties and can make your weight loss journey more pleasant. It is a popular digestive aid which helps relieve bloating and gas², this may help your tummy appear flatter. Add grated ginger to tea's or sprinkle over stir-fries.

5. Lemon

Although lemon itself does not have magical weight loss results, using it in dishes or drinks to enhance flavours may certainly help you this winter. Adding slices of lemon, cucumber and mint to flavour your water may help increase the amount of water consumed daily. A lemon and ginger tea can also be a tasty, warm treat and what is more you will be including two of these wonderful ingredients.

6. Quinoa

Quinoa (pronounced 'keen-wa') is known as a superfood and for good reason. Quinoa is a complete protein meaning it contains all 9 essential amino acids, which is a rare find in grains⁵. It is high in dietary fibre and is a slowly digested carbohydrate making it an excellent low-GI option, this helps keep you fuller for longer and keeps sugar levels stable. Quinoa is very versatile, you can have it as a hot cereal for breakfast, on salads at lunch or as a side with dinner. **FUTURELIFE® Smart Oats®** is unlike any other oat product, it is the first and only scientifically formulated food that blends steel cut oats and ancient grains (such as Organic Quinoa and Sorghum) together. For more information visit <http://futurelife.co.za/product/futurelife-smart-oats/>.

7. Oats

Oats and winter go hand-in-hand, besides this grains amazing weight-loss capabilities, oats are also very affordable. Studies have shown that people who consume oatmeal for breakfast stayed fuller for longer and their cravings were reduced². To keep things interesting add nice ingredients to your morning bowl, make overnight oats or bake oats pancakes. Oats can even be used as a healthy substitution for bread crumbs in various recipes. Why not try these delicious FUTURELIFE® Smart Oats® recipes to keep your oats interesting: <http://futurelife.co.za/category/eat-smart/recipes/oats/>

8. Eggs

Having a dozen of eggs in your fridge will not only help to keep you healthy this winter but the array of benefits that the humble egg offers also comes with a very affordable price tag. Eggs make an excellent breakfast option, studies published since 2010 have shown that protein rich breakfasts, including eggs, have caused a blunted post-meal glucose and insulin response, greater satiety and lower energy intake at the next meal, suggesting a positive role for hunger and weight management^{6,7}. For more on the benefits of eggs, visit <http://futurelife.co.za/eggs-101-eggs-cellent-not/>.

9. Almonds

Sugar cravings is are a reality that many of us deal with and it can be so tempting to grab something that's sweet and high in fat, the downside to this is that these options are definitely not friendly to the waistline. A healthier snack alternative is almonds which have many health benefits amongst which, they help to satisfy hunger and boost energy⁸. Being high in fibre, protein, and anti-oxidants these

small nuts can be added to meals with a smile. Almond butter is delicious and nutritious, try adding it into smoothies, mixing it into breakfast bowls, having it with fruit or spreading it on toast².

10. Green Tea

Green tea provides you with a cup full of benefits. This winter we may want to swap some of our coffee cups for green tea. Green tea contains caffeine, known as a stimulant which may aid in exercise performance and assist in weight loss, however the amount is a lot less than coffee so its effects are milder. Green tea is also a rich source of anti-oxidants⁹ which can protect the body from a number of diseases. For me the most exciting property is its weight loss capabilities, numerous studies^{9,10} have shown that green tea has the potential to increase metabolism, fat burning and decrease appetite, all resulting in a smaller waistline.

CONCLUSION

With the countless benefits and so many options to choose from - I urge you to get creative. Try use as many of the above ingredients in recipes and dishes this winter. I'm sure that when bikini season rolls around, you won't have regrets. Though these ingredients may assist you this winter, always remember it's about having a total healthy diet, drinking lots of water, exercising and having the delicious healthier options in moderation, it's all about a way of life.

References

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Picture:

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